



# CAPITOL NEWS

FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE 21ST MICHIGAN SENATE DISTRICT

---

MARCH 2006

## ***PROPOSED LAW WOULD INCREASE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PRODUCTION.***

Legislation that will revitalize Michigan's agriculture industry and make renewable fuels widely available has been introduced in the Michigan Senate. This legislation will allow for ten new renaissance zones in Michigan to be used specifically for manufacturing alternative energy. This will increase the supply of E85, an 85-percent blend of ethanol, for Michigan business and industry. Ethanol is a clean-burning, high-octane fuel produced primarily from corn kernels. Other legislation in the package focuses on B5, a 5-percent blend of bio-diesel. Bio-diesel is a cleaner-burning diesel fuel made from natural renewable sources, such as soy-bean products. The bills provide motor fuel tax exemptions—7 cents off the 19-cent motor fuel tax on E85 and 3 cents off the 15-cent motor fuel tax on bio-diesel, making it possible for the retailer to offer these fuels at a lower price than regular unleaded gasoline. It will also create the E85 infrastructure development program, to assist dealers in converting existing gas station pumps or construction of new pumps to E85 (match up to \$2,000) or changes at the terminal for bio-diesel (match up to \$15,000).



**STATE SENATOR**

***Ron Jelinek***

---

P.O. Box 30036

Lansing, MI 48909-7536

**OFFICE:** 1.866.305.2121

**E-MAIL:** [senrjelinek@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senrjelinek@senate.michigan.gov)

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.senate.mi.gov/jelinek>

---

**SENATE PASSES CELL-PHONE PRIVACY BILL.** Michigan residents would have greater protection under Senate Bill 127 which would require that mobile-phone service providers receive written consent from their subscribers before listing them in a nationwide directory. Major mobile-phone service providers have discussed creating a directory of the more than 180 million cell-phone users. Consumers have complained about creating such a directory because they don't want their numbers published and possibly used for telemarketing. Unknowingly, some mobile-phone users have consented to have their numbers included in a directory because their contracts include fine print that allows inclusion of their number in a directory.

**BACKGROUND CHECKS REQUIRED FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE EMPLOYEES.** Legislation designed to protect senior citizens and vulnerable individuals in residential care facilities was signed into law last month. The law would require residential care facilities to conduct criminal background checks on all potential employees, as well as obtain fingerprints on all current employees. The bills would restrict the individuals who have regular direct access or provide direct services to patients or adult foster care facility residents. Under SB 622, an individual cannot work, independently contract or be granted clinical privileges in an adult foster care facility if convicted of a violent felony, unless 15 years have lapsed since all terms and conditions of the sentence, parole and probation were completed. Employing individuals convicted of certain violent misdemeanors within the past ten years would also be prohibited. Other offenses are also prohibited for various periods. SB 621 would essentially do the same for health care facilities or agencies, including nursing homes, county medical care facilities, hospices, hospitals that provide swing bed services, homes for the aged and home health agencies.

**MINIMUM WAGE.** The Legislature has passed legislation increasing Michigan's minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.95 an hour beginning in October. Senate Bill 318 provides for additional increases to \$7.15 on July 1, 2007 and \$7.40 on July 1, 2008, but, unlike a proposed ballot measure, does not provide for additional inflationary increases. It has now been sent to the Governor for her signature.

**BILL TO ALLOW INCREASED PROBATION PERIOD FOR CHILD ABUSERS.** Probation for individuals convicted of a child-abuse misdemeanor could increase to a maximum of five years under proposed legislation. Under current law, a district judge may sentence a convicted child abuser who has committed third- or fourth-degree child abuse to a maximum of two years probation, which is well under the allowed five-year maximum probation placed on individuals convicted of misdemeanor stalking and sex offenses. Third-degree child abuse occurs when a person knowingly or intentionally causes physical harm to a child. Fourth-degree child abuse occurs when a person's omission of information or reckless act causes physical harm to a child.